

Class of 2020 Graduates in Special Online Ceremony with Address from U.S. Senator Cory Booker



The Hudson County Schools of Technology held special online commencement ceremonies for the Class of 2020 in light of social distancing measures in place from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The path in which our graduates traveled during their time as students at the Hudson County Schools of Technology shifted greatly over the past few months, but as Albert Einstein once said: 'in the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity,'" said **Superintendent Amy Lin-Rodriguez**. "There are no adequate words to describe the pride I feel when I think about the resilience, perseverance and strength this class and our entire HCST community has demonstrated through these uncertain times. On behalf of the entire District and Board, we congratulate the Class of 2020 on their latest achievement and wish them all the best in their future."

U.S. Senator Cory Booker also addressed students at High Tech High School, County Prep High School and Explore Middle School, telling graduates: the days ahead will be better than the ones we left behind.

"The Class of 2020 I am inspired by you, your grit, your guts, your goodness, all that got you through to this moment of achievement -- I celebrate you, I rejoice in what you have accomplished and you have to know that the options and the opportunity and the possibilities before you are vast." said **U.S. Senator Cory Booker**. "You, as you continue to work, and fight and struggle, and stand up and be kind, as you continue to achieve in life you are a part of the unconquerable faith of the future."

East Newark Mayor Dina Grilo, an alumnus of High Tech High School, delivered a special message to students of that school while Board Trustee Amit Jani, a graduate of County Prep High School, addressed his alma mater.

11 Students Earn Dual High School, Associates Degree



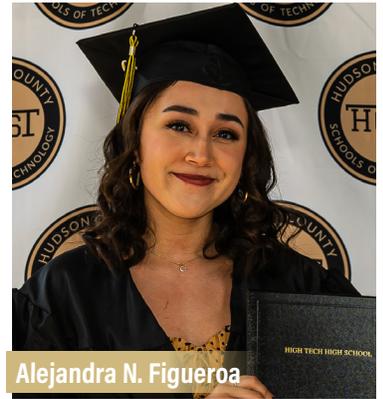
Olivia M. Cartagena



Kennedy L. Christiana



Nancy Do



Alejandra N. Figueroa



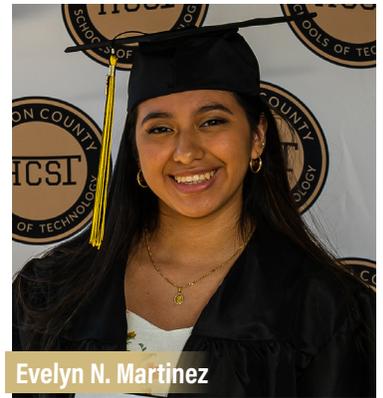
Sean M. Fuehrer



Gabriel Y. Goya



Elena K. Gurczeski



Evelyn N. Martinez



Mellina Lujan Perez Vieta



Rachel F. Stern



Doran A. Traineau

Eleven students from High Tech High School completed their senior years with not just their high school diploma, but also an Associates Degree from Hudson County Community Program. As part of the dual enrollment program, students in the Design and Fabrication and Environmental Science Program were eligible to take a combination of specialized high school classes and after school courses to obtain both degrees.

Participating students register for the equivalent college course while taking the accompanying high school class taught by a High Tech High School teacher who has been approved by the college as qualified to teach college-level material, and pay 25% of the in-county tuition rate for that course. The additional after-school courses are taught by college instructors and the participating students pay 50% of the in-county tuition rate, resulting in a significant savings for students and families.

Students who received dual diplomas this year are: Olivia M. Cartagena of Jersey City, Kennedy L. Christiana of Secaucus, Nancy Do of Jersey City, Alejandra N. Figueroa of Bayonne, Sean M. Fuehrer of Jersey City, Gabriel Y. Goya of Bayonne, Elena K. Gurczeski of Jersey City, Evelyn N. Martinez of Jersey City, Mellina Lujan Perez Vieta of North Bergen, Rachel F. Stern of Guttenberg and Doran A. Traineau of Bayonne.

Class of 2020 Student Spotlight



Stefania Greczylo, of Country Prep High School, majored in Early Childhood Development during her time at HCST. She was responsible for making announcements for students and was a member of the Key Club. Her class voted her as the most likely to become a Pre-K teacher. This fall she will be attending New Jersey City University to pursue a degree in Early Childhood Education.

Luis Jamie, of County Prep High School, majored in Audio Visual Technology. With graduation ceremonies being conducted virtually, Luis played an integral role in helping the administration, tech and audio personnel to ensure the process and editing of videos was prepared in a timely and efficient manner. He received a \$1,000 scholarship for his achievements and will be attending New Jersey City University to study Media Arts.



Stephan Castellanos, of Explore Middle School, was voted by his peers to serve as the Student Council President for this past school year. A talented artist and creative writer, he received the eighth grade superlative for most likely to put a smile on your face. He will continue his studies at HCST at High Tech High School as a Media Arts Major.

Madison Chambers, of Explore Middle School, served as a member of the Student Council and Peer Leadership Club. Her classmates voted her as most likely to be the first female president. She was the recipient of an HCST scholarship and will attend High Tech High School in the fall to study Media Arts.



Andrew Wholf, of High Tech High School, is a talented musician who has been playing the guitar since he was six years old. He describes his love for music as an "ability to bring people together" which has taught him valuable life lessons. During his time at HCST, he has also accompanied his instructor, Michael Buscio, in his own music. Buscio credits Andrew as being as talented as John Mayer and Eric Clapton. Andrew will be attending Berklee this fall.

Robert Feliciano, of High Tech High School, started his high school career with aspirations of becoming an engineer. After meeting a friend in the robotics program who was planning to attend Yale for computer science, Robert instantly became fascinated with the capabilities of computers. To this day, that remains his greatest interest and plans to continue his studies at Stevens Institute of Technology after receiving three scholarships.



Graduates Receive Send Off from HCST Administration, Faculty and Staff

In addition to each school's virtual ceremonies, graduates were able to pick up their diplomas at their school to receive in person acknowledgements from the administration. During this intimate and socially distant time period, graduates had their pictures taken with their attending family members and were given a commemorative tote filled with graduation memorabilia.

"The graduation event held at High Tech High School, and all of our schools, was a personal, meaningful experience that provided the opportunity to see our seniors and wish them well," said **HTHS Guidance Counselor Carrie Rapaport**. "I loved seeing the graduates in person to wish them luck, offer congratulations and some 'air' hugs. I am so grateful that I had the chance to be a part of the excitement and positivity with the Class of 2020 and their proud families."

Wishing the Class of 2020 All the Best

With an untraditional graduation ceremony this year, faculty and staff send a few words of encouragement and congratulations to the Class of 2020. [Click here to watch the full tribute to the Class of 2020.](#)

"Congratulations to the Class of 2020. I wish you lots of successes in all your endeavors."

Ms. Raluca Shields
Performing Arts Instructor



"Put this behind you, you got the rest of your lives, you're Hudson County strong, and people will love you forever, I will."

Mr. Chris DePierro
Broadcasting Technology Instructor

"It's been quite a four years we've had together, and this isn't quite ending the way we wanted to, but you guys are all bound for great things and I'm sure you'll be very successful. Good luck."

Mr. William Goold,
Chemistry Instructor



"Congratulations, don't stop creating and make life spectacular."

Mr. Jared Krinsky
CAAD Instructor

"So my last words for you all, don't leave any blanks, believe in yourselves, always check your work, and don't forget your trig. Congratulations Class of 2020."

Ms. Rebecca Zlotnick
Math Instructor



"[We] all started teaching at CP in 2016 - when you were all freshmen. All three of us have senior homeroom whom we have had the pleasure of getting to see EVERY morning for 4 years. You are our FIRST class as teachers and one we will certainly NEVER forget. So, know that you all have a special place in our hearts and we will miss you in the CP hallways. We wish you nothing but the best in all you do. Congratulations!"

Ms. Sylvia Donofrio
Cosmetology Instructor

Mr. Jason Carey
Audio/Visual Tech Instructor

Ms. Irma Noel
English/Language Arts Instructor

Administration

School Board

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Nicholas Fargo, Business Administrator
John Shinnick, Assistant Business Administrator

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